



Olympic View Resource Area Cap Repair

Tacoma and Ruston, Washington

May 2020

The Commencement Bay Nearshore-Tideflats Superfund site is located in the cities of Tacoma and Ruston at the southern end of Puget Sound in Washington. The site encompasses an active commercial seaport and includes 12 square miles of shallow water, shoreline, and adjacent land - most of which is highly developed and industrialized.

EPA placed the site on the Superfund National Priorities List in 1983 due to widespread contamination of the water, sediments, and upland areas. EPA has divided the site into several “operable units” that are being managed as distinct cleanup sites. The Olympic View Resource Area cap is within the sediment operable unit.

Olympic View Resource Area (OVRA)

The OVRA is located within the boundaries of the Commencement Bay Nearshore/Tideflats Superfund Site and includes nearly 13 acres of intertidal, subtidal, and upland area.

Contaminants of concern included dioxins (polychlorinated dibenzodioxins and dibenzofurans), metals (arsenic, copper, mercury, and zinc), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

The City of Tacoma removed approximately 600 wooden pilings and 11,438 tons of contaminated sediment and debris from the nearshore area, which was disposed of in an off-site upland landfill. The city also capped approximately 2.26 acres of contaminated marine sediments within the intertidal and subtidal areas. The city completed this work in October 2002, and EPA approved the Removal Action Completion Report in March 2003.

Monitoring surveys performed from 2003 to 2014 did not identify significant changes to the cap at the OVRA site.

However, a visual inspection in August 2015 noted that beach surface material appeared to have shifted. Again in 2016, material movement was observed and later confirmed during a land-based survey. The survey indicated that in two areas the cap had been reduced to below the required minimum cap design thickness, although underlying contaminated sediments had not yet been exposed. These results triggered development of a Contingency Planning Proposal for EPA in accordance with the Final Long-Term Monitoring and Reporting Plan for the OVRA site (Hart Crowser and Pentec 2003).

Repairing the cap

EPA plans to have the City of Tacoma repair a portion of the existing sediment cap at the Olympic View Resource Area within the Commencement Bay Nearshore/Tideflats Superfund site. The area of the cap repair is the northern end of the peninsula lying between the Thea Foss and Middle Waterways in Tacoma, Washington (see map).

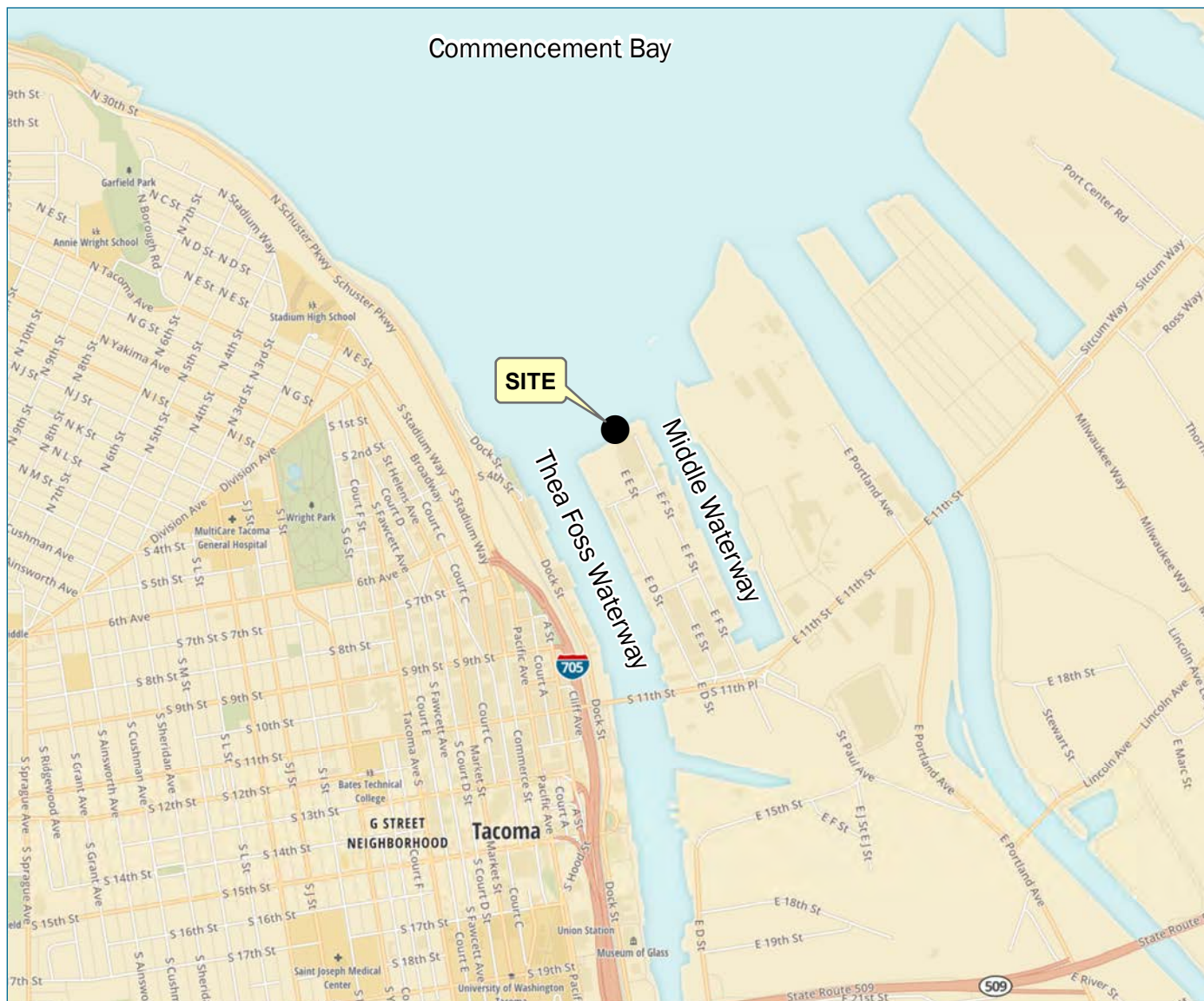
The repair effort planned by EPA and City will increase the cap thickness to its original design and prevent erosion of the cap in the future. The proposed work includes placing up to two feet of clean sand over 0.83 acres, between 15 inches and four feet of cobble, gravel and sand beach material for erosion protection over 2.75 acres, 18 inches of streambed cobbles for scour protection over 0.06 acres at the upper edge of the cap, and a 9-inch thick layer of forage fish habitat material over 0.41 acres.

Construction is scheduled to begin June 1, 2020 and will be completed by September 30, 2020. All the work will be performed from the upland side of the property and will be performed in-the-dry at low tides with land-based equipment.

As we continue to adjust to the evolving COVID-19 situation, EPA is taking the necessary steps to ensure that decisions about ongoing cleanup activities at Superfund sites are made with the health and safety of communities, EPA staff, state and tribal partners, and contractors as the priority.

Therefore, decisions about continuing on-site activities will be made on a case-by-case basis. We are working closely with our local, state and tribal partners to evaluate options for continuing site work or securing sites, especially in areas where local health declarations are in effect due to COVID-19.

Commencement Bay



Vicinity Map

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Feet

For More Information

For additional information or if you have questions about this work, please contact:

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